



STATE OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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For Immediate Release

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Historic Emergency Alert System Test **First ever nationwide alert set for November 9, 2011**

(MADISON) – Wisconsin will participate in the first nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) next month. The test will be heard on radio stations, and will be viewed on televisions across the country as part of national preparedness efforts.

The test will occur on **Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.** and will last approximately 3 minutes. Television viewers and radio station listeners will hear a message indicating that *"this is a test."*

The national-level EAS is a public alert and warning system that enables the President of the United States to address the American public during extreme emergencies. Similar to local EAS tests that are conducted frequently, the nationwide test will involve broadcast radio and television stations, cable television, satellite radio and television services and wireline providers across all states and territories.

"Although EAS is frequently used by our state and local governments to send weather alerts and other emergency information, there has never been a national activation of the system," says Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Brian Satula. "EAS messages were sent out 23 times in the last two years by local and state government agencies in Wisconsin to communicate vital emergency information. Last February, EAS messages were used to warn people about treacherous road conditions during the Groundhog Day Blizzard."

The purpose of the November 9, 2011 test is to assess the readiness and effectiveness of the current system and identify improvements to better serve and protect our citizens and communities.

The test has been in the development stages for the last two years. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Communications Commission and the National Weather Service, along with state, local and tribal agencies, have been coordinating this test.

The EAS test is a great reminder that everyone in Wisconsin should have an emergency preparedness kit and create an emergency plan for themselves, their families, communities and

businesses. Anyone can visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov> for more information about how to “Get a Kit, Make a Plan and Stay Informed” and what to do in the event of an actual emergency.

Frequently Asked Questions about the EAS Test

What is the Emergency Alert System (EAS)? The national-level EAS is a national public alert and warning system that enables the President of the United States to address the American public during extreme emergencies. Alerting authorities can leverage the state and local EAS to send alerts and warnings to radio and television stations, cable television, satellite radio and television services and wireline providers.

What is the Nationwide Emergency Alert System (EAS) Test? The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) will send an EAS test message to all participating radio, television, cable and satellite providers.

What Can I Expect to Hear/See? The test may look like regular, local EAS tests that most people are already familiar with, but there will be some differences in what viewers will see and hear. The audio message will repeat “This is a test.” The video message scroll may not indicate “This is a test” due to programming limitations. The message will last for approximately three minutes and then regular programming will resume.

Where Will I Hear/See the Test? On all participating radio, television, cable and satellite providers (who are called EAS Participants).

When Will the Test Occur? November 9, 2011 at 1:00 PM (central time). That time was selected to make sure the test can occur during normal business hours across many time zones.

For more information please contact Tod Pritchard at 608-242-3324 or 608-219-4008 or tod.pritchard@wisconsin.gov.